

# Educational Partnerships for Girls: Development Successes

Development assistance programs to promote education have traditionally worked with ministries of education. Yet major barriers to education, especially for girls, often lie outside educational systems. And just as the barriers can be found outside educational systems, so too can the means to promote girls' education. The development of community partnerships is emerging as a powerful way to create sustainable girls' education initiatives, and USAID is at the forefront in promoting this strategy.

Extending beyond educational institutions, USAID projects are involving local partners from public, private, community, religious, media, and non-governmental sectors who can address constraints beyond the purview of ministries of education. These constraints include high school fees, the loss of domestic labor when girls are sent to school, traditional beliefs and practices that discourage parents who would otherwise prefer that their daughters attend school, and girls' safety when distances to school are long.

The new local partnerships show promise for lasting improvements for girls' education, which in turn has larger benefits. A girl's ability to read and write can make the difference in whether she obtains or generates employment, plans her family, and provides the necessary nutrition and hygiene to keep her children healthy. The increased productivity and improved health that are linked to girls' education directly benefit both girls and their families. The benefits also have a positive effect on their communities and society.

Involvement of local partners means that commitment to girls' education is driven by the citizens of the country—not by the international donor community. The

inclusion of local opinion makers who have both influence and resources helps ensure that girls will have increased access to education, higher enrollments, greater retention rates, and higher completion rates than they would have without local support.

The following profiles of different types of partnerships illustrate how various groups have worked together to improve the status of girls' education in their respective countries. Initially catalyzed by USAID assistance, the partnership programs in Guatemala and Pakistan now function independently of USAID support. In Morocco, after just one year, the program is establishing the basis for sustainability.

## SCHOLARSHIPS TO STEM DROP-OUT RATES

In the early 1990s, drop-out rates for rural girls in Guatemala were very high and began as early as first grade. The government developed a scholarship program to address this problem.

The program was initially managed by the Ministry of Education. Realizing it was not equipped to administer the aspects of the program requiring

community support, the Ministry solicited assistance from the Guatemalan Association for Girls' Education, an organization of senior representatives from private and public groups committed to promoting girls' education. A member of this umbrella organization, Fundación para el Desarrollo Rural (FUNRURAL)—a foundation of the private Coffee Grower's Association—agreed to administer the program nationally. The Ministry of Education continued to fund the program, and local distribution of the scholarships was delegated to parent committees in participating communities.

FUNRURAL's involvement injected new life into the program and improved its efficiency. The collaboration between the Ministry and the private sector also had the powerful benefit of building mutual trust and respect. The success of this partnership involving the private sector, public sector, and civil society has led the government to increase its investment in the program, from 6,211 scholarships in 1996 to a planned allocation of 60,000 in 2000.

### NGO LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In the late 1980s, the primary school teaching force in Balochistan Province, Pakistan, was small and poorly trained. The dearth of women teachers discouraged girls' enrollments because parents did not want male teachers instructing their daughters.

This situation began to change when a local NGO realized the critical nature of the problem. The Society for Community Support for Primary Education in Balochistan today works with communities to tackle the causes of girls' low enrollments. Society workers recruit and train local women to serve as teachers. The Society also mobilizes communities to provide buildings for schools. Village education committees monitor girls' and teachers' attendance, observe teaching practices, and ensure that girls are properly educated. Other NGOs, adapting the Society's model, are replicating this process in other districts.

The Pakistan Department of Education supports the new schools and new teachers. When communities have demonstrated their commitment to girls' education, the Department invests resources to maintain buildings and purchase curriculum materials. It also trains and pays the new teachers. This support encourages more women to teach in rural communities.

The cooperative effort among the government, NGOs, and communities ensures that all partners maintain a vested interest in the education of young girls. Primary enrollment of girls has tripled in Balochistan since 1989, largely as a result of the community support process.

### MATCHING CORPORATIONS WITH SCHOOLS

Private sector industries are realizing they can play critical roles in the development of a country, as can be seen in the case of Morocco's Wafabank. Only 48 percent of girls in Morocco are enrolled in primary schools, compared with a 70 percent enrollment rate for boys. Not surprisingly, literacy rates for women are little more than half those for men.

Inspired by USAID's 1998 international conference on girls' education held in Washington, D.C., leaders of Morocco's banking sector resolved to change the educational imbalance. They developed a pilot program that matches local branches of a major Moroccan financial institution, Wafabank, with local schools and encourages the clients of the branches to become members of school support boards. These boards provide managerial, organizational, and financial assistance to schools that need this kind of help.

As employees of a successful private-sector enterprise, Wafabank staff contribute their skills as efficient managers. Their technical guidance, along with their financial assistance, helps ensure that girls get the support they need for their education.

## Stakeholder Roles and Benefits

Partner Types	Roles	Benefits
<b>Businesses</b>	<p><b>Infrastructure Contributions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide equipment for communities to build latrines for girls</li> <li>■ Assist with funding and constructing safe housing to attract women teachers</li> <li>■ Build roads to ensure that girls get to school safely, or build boundary walls when security is an issue</li> </ul> <p><b>Technical Assistance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide girls' education NGOs with technology and communications support and with employee volunteers</li> <li>■ Provide leadership training</li> </ul> <p><b>Financial Contributions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Contribute in-kind donations</li> <li>■ Offer financial, administrative, and technical resources</li> <li>■ Provide uniforms, school supplies, and other school resources</li> <li>■ Establish and contribute to scholarship program for girls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ More educated girls lead to a higher pool of skilled labor for the workforce</li> <li>■ Positive publicity</li> <li>■ Helps traditional business shed inaccurate and often unrecognized assumptions about NGOs and become more creative</li> <li>■ Sets a model for new partnerships with government</li> <li>■ Tax breaks</li> </ul>
<b>Regional NGOs and Other Intermediaries</b>	<p><b>Technical Assistance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Stimulate and provide resources for institutional change and organizational development</li> <li>■ Provide technical expertise for NGOs</li> <li>■ Facilitate partnership process</li> </ul> <p><b>Organizational Contributions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Organize community constituencies</li> <li>■ Help build consensus among member groups</li> <li>■ Create forums of contact through projects and events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Opportunities to be active players in education projects</li> <li>■ Positive publicity</li> </ul>
<b>Grassroots NGOs and Community Groups</b>	<p><b>Organizational Contributions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Solicit community volunteers</li> <li>■ Tap knowledge of local communities and issues</li> <li>■ Mobilize people in communities</li> <li>■ Implement projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Direct work with businesses gives opportunity to influence or reform private sector activities more effectively</li> <li>■ Direct technical and financial support from partners</li> </ul>
<b>Donor Organizations</b>	<p><b>Financial Contributions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide school funding and other resources, such as school uniforms, supplies, and computers</li> <li>■ Engage in policy dialogue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Positive publicity</li> <li>■ Concrete donor achievement records</li> </ul>
<b>Governments</b>	<p><b>Legal Initiatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Create laws and policies supporting girls' education projects</li> </ul> <p><b>Financial Contributions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reallocate national budget for increased education funding</li> <li>■ Provide school fee waivers/vouchers for school supplies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increases in girls' education correlated with a healthier population and with long-term economic growth and stability</li> <li>■ Respect from constituencies</li> </ul>

## PROMOTIONAL ALLIANCES: GETTING THE WORD OUT

Social marketing increasingly plays important roles in development programs. Effective public awareness programs, carefully designed and mounted, have been critical for bringing the importance and value of girls' education into the public consciousness. In Guinea, the Ministry of Education established an equity committee that trained local education promoters to conduct a public awareness campaign on the value of girls' education. As a result of the promoters' work in communities, two national networks of partners dedicated to promoting girls' education were formed. The first, the National Working Group, represents government, business, religious organizations, the media, and the NGO community. The second network, the National Alliance for Girls' Education, is a voluntary group of leaders from all sectors. Both networks work on behalf of girls' education by collaborating with local and international media, stimulating continuous discussion and actions through community consultations and focus groups, and participating in international conferences.

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